



Negotiation

We proceed from an understanding of the vanguard-to-mass relationship between the communists and the working class, where the latter are **organised** in trade unions primarily for self-defence, (and not like the vanguard communist party, which is primarily organised for revolutionary purposes).

We included the [Rules of Debate](#) that are applied within those and other mass organisations.

We now come to the practical means by which trade unions do their business: **Negotiation**.

Negotiation is what two parties must always do in order to arrive at an agreement to exchange one thing for another, or in other words, to arrive at a common **contract**. In the case of trade union negotiations with employers, the two sides are trying to arrive at a bargain for the exchange of Labour-Power for money (wages).

Inflation (a rise in the money prices of all commodities) makes it inevitable that the price of Labour-Power must also be re-negotiated at frequent, often annual, intervals. Contrary to what is often written about negotiations, there is no presumption of dispute about this process. On the contrary, the **invariable aim on all sides is to arrive at a bargain**. (If, as it appeared to be the case in the AMCU “strike” in the three biggest platinum mines in February, 2014, at least one if not both of the parties are not interested in having a bargain, then what is going on is NOT a negotiation, but something else.)

On the way to the bargain, there may be “failure to agree”, and sometimes there may be a “withdrawal of labour”, but there is no attempt to upset the relationship of boss and worker. The boss/worker relationship is confirmed, and not threatened, by the process of negotiation.

So long as there is “failure to agree”, people will talk of a “wage dispute”, and sometimes they will use military language to describe what happens. Yet even in military terms, as Clausewitz wrote in his book “[On War](#)”, “*The Result in War is Never Absolute*”. In other words the combatants will inevitably have to live together in peace again, after the war.

Negotiation is a skill that can be learned. The attached document is a very good short introduction to wage negotiation. It comes from the MIA [Encyclopedia of Marxism](#).

- The above is to introduce the original reading-text: [Negotiations, MIA](#).
- To download any of the CU courses in PDF files [please click here](#).